

Free CeCe McDonald

Build solidarity for survivor of racist, anti-trans attack

By Kris Hamel

The struggle to free Chrishaun “CeCe” McDonald in Minneapolis deserves wide publicity and support. McDonald, 23, is an African-American transgender woman who was brutally attacked by racist, anti-lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer bigots on June 5. As is often the case in a society permeated by racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQ bigotry and oppression, McDonald, the victim and survivor, was the only person charged after the attack. She goes on trial April 30 on charges of second-degree murder and intent to commit murder.

Around 12:30 a.m. on June 5, McDonald was walking to a grocery store with friends, all of them young, African American and queer or allied. As they walked past the Schooner Tavern, a group of older whites standing outside the bar began hurling racist, anti-trans and anti-gay epithets at them.

When McDonald stated that she and her friends would not tolerate such hate speech, one of the women taunting them smashed a glass in McDonald’s face, puncturing her cheek and lacerating her salivary gland. A fight broke out, and when it was over, Dean Schmitz lay dead of stab wounds. The only one arrested and sent to jail that night was McDonald. It was later revealed that Schmitz had a swastika tattooed on his body.

McDonald received medical treatment briefly for her serious facial wounds, which required 11 stitches. She was then left alone for hours, interrogated and placed in solitary confinement. She spent four months incarcerated following the attack. For two months she was denied follow-up medical treatment for the swelling, headaches and ear and eye pressure resulting from the injuries she received.

Trans people, especially trans people of color, face disproportionately high rates of harassment, violence, police brutality, arrest,

Continued on page 7

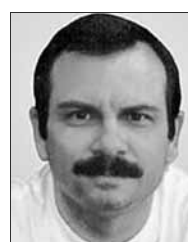


PHOTO: SUPPORTCECE.WORDPRESS.COM

CUBAN FIVE and Alan Gross

11

FREE THE CUBAN 5
unjustly held
in U.S. prisons
for more than
13 years



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez and Fernando González Llort. Rene González Sehwerert, while recently released, is still being forced to remain in the U.S. against his will.

PRISONERS' RIGHTS

Rallies coast to coast

7

SAVE POSTAL JOBS & SERVICES

5

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

'End discrimination'

5



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PENNSYLVANIA



Students, parents say 'Don't cut our schools'

3

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Workers World Newspaper

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From the 19th to the 21st century: A Marxist view of socialism

From a talk given by Workers World managing editor LeiLani Dowell at the Feb. 10 WW forum in New York City.

In the first talk in this series, Richard Kossaly discussed the contradiction in capitalist society between the means of production, which are socialized in this society, and private, not social, accumulation. This inherent contradiction is the basis of society's division into classes, into the rich and poor. It's also the source of the crises of capitalism.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' vision was that socialism would do away with this contradiction by doing away with private appropriation altogether. The idea was that in the capitalist countries where the level of production was high in comparison to the rest of world, the overthrow of capitalism in favor of a socialist society would improve the lot of the masses of people.

However, Marx and Engels both realized that you don't just have a revolution one day, then wake up the next to a perfect socialist society. Even before revolutions began taking place, they were thinking and strategizing around the fact that in the beginning there would still be leftovers of bourgeois society.

Marx's 1891 document, "The Critique of the Gotha Program," challenged the proposed political program of the German Social Democratic Party at the time. In it Marx describes two stages of communism. In the first transitional stage, people would be compensated equally in relation to the amount of labor they do.

This sounds great compared to what we have now, right? Today, people are paid on some arbitrary pay scale that has more to do with what the capitalists think they can get away with paying workers — for the bosses, it's the lower the better — than the actual time and effort a worker puts into the job.

Marx and Engels also envisioned the destruction of the arbitrary division between physical and mental labor. Think about it — is sanitation workers' work any less taxing than the work a so-called "professional" puts in? Is it any less important to society? Yet sanitation workers are devalued in capitalist society and therefore paid less.

'To each according to their work'

So the slogan envisioned for this first stage of socialist society — "From each according to their ability, to each according to their work" — is a big advance.

The idea of "equal rights," however, is not the highest level of achievement possible. In capitalist society, it's huge; it's an advance against bigotry, against racism, against sexism, etc. And obviously we fight for equal rights all the time; I don't want anyone to get the wrong idea. But Marx and Engels envisioned more.

Consider this: Not everyone has the ability to work as much as others do. Moreover, different people have different needs — say, there's two workers, but one is raising a family while the other is only supporting herself. Paying these workers the same amount isn't exactly equality, even if they put in the same amount of work.

Marx wrote, "What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER
LeiLani Dowell on a recent speaking tour in Wisconsin.

capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society — after the deductions have been made [deductions needed to maintain equipment and provide for social welfare] — exactly what he gives to it. ... Here ... the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is the exchange of equal values.

"In spite of this advance," Marx continues, "this equal right ... tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus productive capacity, as a natural privilege. It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right. ... To avoid all these defects, rights, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal."

Because there is not yet complete abundance, the first stage of socialism will have to initially progress along those lines. However, once society reaches full abundance, Marx and Engels said, we won't have to measure people against each other based on the amount of work they do.

Marx concludes, "In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly — only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his [and her] ability, to each according to his [and her] needs!"

Dictatorship of the people needed to transform society

The other part of this equation in the first stage of socialism is that the dictatorship of the capitalists, of the ruling class, would be replaced by a dictatorship of the proletariat, of the workers and oppressed. Now, similar to the idea of equal pay, this would obviously be an advance — a state set up to be truly "for the people," with the people's interests in mind rather than profits. But just like Marx and Engels saw the concept of equal pay under socialism as transitory, so did they see the dictatorship of the proletariat as transitory.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary to transform society — to organize society so that the productive forces are utilized to meet people's needs most effectively and to combat the bourgeois culture that will still need to be challenged once the revolution takes place. It would also be needed to combat the forces of counterrevolution — because nobody thinks the capitalists will simply walk away once we take what they think is theirs.

But once the productive forces are set up enough so that everyone is provided for according to their needs, the idea is that the state itself would become unnecessary, obsolete and wither away. That would be the high-

Continued on page 6

WORKERS WORLD this week...

★ In the U.S.

Free CeCe McDonald	1
A Marxist view of socialism	2
Communities defend health care for the poor	3
'Education is a human right'	3
Attacks on unions, public education	3
No justice — no peace! Stop racist police!	3
Fired Pacific Steel workers march for dignity	4
Longshore workers say Occupy Movement crucial	4
Protesters tell Obama 'Jobs now!'	4
Women in the trades demand fair hiring at Temple U.	5
Stop the destruction of the postal service	5
Protesters demand 'AT&T: Where is the love?'	5
Detroit & the struggle against the economic crisis	6
Boston Black History forum	7
Protests demand human rights for prisoners	7
WW newspaper to participate in Left Forum	10

★ Around the world

'Free Khader Adnan!'	8
London conference on Somalia	8
Worldwide solidarity with Greece	9
Workers threaten occupation as Caterpillar closes plant	9
Report details crimes of Alan Gross	11
Tragic prison fire shows Honduras' society chaotic	11

★ Editorials

Argentina vs. Britain: taking sides	10
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★ Noticias En Español

Contradicciones en el capitalismo	12
Estudiantes ocupan reunión	12

Workers World

55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold
Technical Editor: Lal Roohk
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,
Leslie Feinberg, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead,
Gary Wilson
West Coast Editor: John Parker
Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe,
Greg Butterfield, Jaimeson Champion, G. Dunkel,
Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales,
Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash,
Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette,
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Technical Staff: Sue Davis, Shelley Ettinger,
Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno
Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez,
Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Michael Martinez,
Carlos Vargas
Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

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National Office

55 W. 17 St.
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta

P.O. Box 5565
Atlanta, GA 30307
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore

c/o Solidarity Center
2011 N. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
443.909.8964
baltimore@workers.org

Boston

284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.522.6626
Fax 617.983.3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.

367 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago

27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland

P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Denver

denver@workers.org

Detroit

5920 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
313.459.0777
detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.

331 W. Main St., Ste. 408
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

Houston

P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles

1905 Rodeo Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90018
la@workers.org
323.515.5870

Milwaukee

milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia

P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Pittsburgh

pittsburgh@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.

585.436.6458
rochester@workers.org

San Diego

P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92163
619.692.0355
sandiego@workers.org

San Francisco

2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco
CA 94103
415.738.4739
sf@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.

tucson@workers.org

Washington, D.C.

P.O. Box 57300
Washington, DC 20037
dc@workers.org

MILWAUKEE

Communities defend health care for the poor

Service Employees Local 1 kicked off their “Hands Off BadgerCare” campaign Feb. 16 in Milwaukee. Gathering outside the Aurora Sinai Medical Center at noon, more than 100 community members, students, union members and leaders demanded that Gov. Scott Walker’s planned cuts on behalf of Wall Street to BadgerCare — a unique program in Wisconsin that allows access to health care services for poor and working people — be stopped immediately.

Under the 2011-13 state budget, the Department of Health Services has the sole authority to make sweeping cuts to Medicaid and BadgerCare. Walker, other right-wing members of the DHS and the Wisconsin Legislature want to cut more than \$550 million from BadgerCare. If

passed, 263,000 BadgerCare recipients would face increased co-pays and reduced benefits. The austerity budget would slash 64,000 people from the program entirely, almost half of whom would be children.

At the Feb. 16 rally, a diverse cross section of community members testified about how BadgerCare coverage has saved their lives and the lives of their loved ones. After the speakout, a spirited picket line took place, with protesters chanting “Hands Off BadgerCare!” and demanding that the 1% pay.

To help stop the cuts, call 800-362-9472 to tell legislators “Hands Off BadgerCare; Make the Rich Pay.” For more information, visit wisconsinjobsnow.org.

Report and photo by Bryan G. Pfeifer

Feb. 16 rally demands accessible health care for all.



Students tell Pa. governor: ‘Education is a human right’

By Joe Piette

More than 400 high school students, parents and activists from Pittsburgh, Reading, Chester, Philadelphia and other cities converged on Pennsylvania’s Capitol in Harrisburg to demand love for schools on Feb. 14, Valentine’s Day. The majority of the students were people of color, who came to speak their minds before the assembled media in front of the Capitol’s rotunda steps.

“These budget cuts hurt,” said Tia Torres, a high school student from Pittsburgh. With tears in her eyes, she described how last year’s slashing of school funding affected students in her school. “Are you setting us up for failure?” she asked as she described the leaky roof, busted water pipes and weak floors in her school building.

Almost \$1 billion was cut in last year’s state funding for basic education. An Associated Press analysis of those budget cuts showed that where the median household income is less than \$36,000, the state cuts took \$609 from every student, compared to just \$84 in Lower Merion, for example, where the median household income is \$110,000.

Gov. Tom Corbett’s budget for this year does nothing to repair the crises many school districts find themselves in. Harrisburg, York, Lancaster, Lebanon, Reading, Chester-Upland and Philadelphia — places with high levels of poverty — are all on a state list of 18 financially distressed school districts. To make matters worse, Corbett proposes eliminating a \$100 million Accountability Block Grant program that many districts use to fund kindergarten and pre-K programs.

As teachers, school nurses, workers

and staff are being laid off, more and more programs for youth are being eliminated; public schools are being closed due to severe underfunding; and officials are handing over scarce resources to private charter schools. The powerful people who want to privatize our schools are using many different means: state control, high stakes standardized testing, school closures, merit pay and attacks on teacher unions — anything to justify the private takeover of the education system.

Proponents of charter schools claim to be creating a better system, but studies refute that claim. The Schools Matter blog reports that “urban charter schools make it easy to segregate based on race, economics, gender and disability.” (www.schoolsmatter.info) The end result is a two-tiered education system with less accountability and more uneducated youth, but huge profits.

Higher education is also under attack. The governor cut state funding to higher education in 2011 by nearly 20 percent. Colleges responded by raising tuition and cutting programs. This week, Gov. Corbett called for an additional 30 percent cut in state aid to Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh and Temple University, and a 20 percent cut to the 14 state-owned universities, including Cheyney University and West Chester University.

State attacks community programs

Last year, the state eliminated funding for the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program, the health care program for 40,000 low-income adults called Adult Basics, and the state’s \$130 million job training program. Not only

are those cuts continued this year, but another \$631 million is being cut from the Department of Public Welfare.

Threatened programs include behavioral health services; drug and alcohol, mental health and intellectual disabilities programs; special grants for county child welfare; homeless assistance; the general assistance cash grant program; and cash assistance to nearly 68,000 disabled adults, domestic violence survivors, children in the care of nonrelatives and others.

A further attack on the poor, effective May 1, is an asset test for the 1.8 million Pennsylvanians who receive food stamps. Individuals under age 60 who have more than \$5,500 in savings and other assets will no longer be eligible to receive food stamps.

Last year’s final state budget was reached through a political compromise that slightly decreased the proposed massive cuts in education, but increased cuts in social service programs instead.

Baseera Watson, a high school student



WWW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

representing the Philadelphia Student Union, asserted at the Harrisburg protest: “We reject the premise that we are pitted against each other; that poor and working people have to fight each other over scraps. We should not have to choose between Head Start and available school nurses. We should not have to choose between education and social services. We should not have to choose at all. Education is a human right!” □

NEW YORK STATE

Attacks unions and public education

By G. Dunkel

Grover J. “Russ” Whitehurst, an education expert at the Brookings Institution and a high-ranking official in the Department of Education under George W. Bush, admits, “We know much more about what works and what doesn’t in education than we did 15 years ago ... but our level of ignorance dwarfs our understanding by orders of magnitude.” He made this claim in testimony before the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education this past November.

This high “level of ignorance,” however, has not hindered states from imposing harsh, arbitrary and inconsistent evaluation standards on teachers, hoping to pin the blame for educational failures on what happens in the classroom.

Education is in crisis in the United States, especially since changes in the economy have made advanced skills acquired through education, rather than on-the-job training, a gateway to employment at a decent wage. But many students

leaving high school, especially those from communities of color, are not prepared to go on.

New York State’s evaluation system, which was just accepted Feb. 16 by New York State United Teachers as a framework for local school board contracts throughout the state, was opposed by nearly 1,400 principals because it relies on student test scores to evaluate teachers.

Carol Corbett Burris, who won an educator of the year award in 2010 and is principal in a fairly affluent school district on Long Island, has written a long and careful critique of New York’s plan, which is considered a “national model” by the federal DOE. (tinyurl.com/73a9fqa)

One of the most pressing issues for teachers’ unions is how to respond to unfair evaluations. Teachers can be rated as “ineffective” for all sorts of reasons outside their performance, including personal bias; the principal’s need to reduce personnel costs, which might lead

Continued on page 8

No justice — no peace! Stop racist police!

On Feb. 16, 21 activists gathered for a pretrial Manhattan court session to face charges of disorderly conduct after being arrested at an Oct. 21 protest against the New York Police Department’s “stop and frisk” policy. The policy targets Black and Latino/a youth, allowing cops to harass and criminalize them for simply being on the streets of New York. During the Oct. 21 rally — a multinational protest of hundreds of people — the 21 who were ar-

rested allegedly blocked the entrance to a Harlem police precinct.

All 21 protesters will be tried together on April 30, with many supporters taking off work and school to be present in support. “We get a chance now to dramatize it in a much more intense manner — and that is beautiful,” Princeton University professor Cornel West said. The struggle against racism and repression continues!

— Report by Anne Pruden

With hundreds of supporters

Fired Pacific Steel workers march for dignity

By Terri Kay
Berkeley, Calif.

Hundreds of people marched on Feb. 17 alongside 200 fired Pacific Steel Casting Company workers through downtown Berkeley and to the steel plant. The workers, most of whom had 5 to 20 years seniority, had been fired after a “silent” U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid. These raids check Social Security numbers of workers, as submitted on federal I-9 forms. Ironically, Berkeley is a sanctuary city for migrant people.

Last March, the Pacific Steel workers went on strike to fight against increased health care charges and an attack on their seniority rights. Many feel these ICE raids have targeted plants where workers have tried to stand up for their rights.

One of the fired workers declared, “We

are only workers, not criminals!” These workers have not only lost their jobs, leaving their families without financial support, but they’ve lost health care as well. It appears they may also have lost any way to collect their pensions, to which they have contributed during all the years they worked for the company.

A daughter of one of the workers said, “Here we are today, still fighting to stay on the land that once belonged to us.”

The workers are filing a class-action lawsuit against Pacific Steel Casting for systematically denying all workers proper lunch breaks and an adequate cafeteria. They plan to continue their struggle, looking at the upcoming May Day demonstrations as the next step in their fight for their rights to a job and human dignity. There are no borders in the workers’ struggle! □



PHOTO: GINO PEPI

Longshore workers say Occupy Movement crucial to EGT settlement

The following press release was issued Feb. 11 by Occupy Oakland, Occupy Portland and Occupy Longview.

Members of the [International Longshore and Warehouse Union] and the labor community named the Occupy Movement as key to the settlement reached [Feb. 9] between ILWU Local 21 and the Export Grain Terminal. The contract finally provides for the use of ILWU labor in the grain terminal at the Port of Longview.

After staging Dec. 12 port shutdowns in solidarity with Local 21, the West Coast Occupy Movement planned coordinated action together with labor allies for a land and water blockade of an EGT ship in Longview, should it attempt to use scab labor to load. Occupys in states where EGT’s parent company Bunge has its growth and operations were also planning actions against the company on the day of the arrival of the ship.

“This is a victory for Occupy in their involvement in forcing negotiations. Make no mistake — the solidarity and organization between the Occupy Movement and the Longshoremen won this contract,” said Jack Mulcahy, ILWU officer with Lo-

cal 8 in Portland, Ore. “The mobilizations of the Occupy Movement across the country, particularly in Oakland, Portland, Seattle and Longview, were a critical element in bringing EGT to the bargaining table and forcing a settlement with ILWU Local 21.”

“West Coast Occupys had already demonstrated their ability to stage such a blockade by shutting down ports along the West Coast on Dec. 12, as well as the Port of Oakland on Nov. 2,” said Anthony Leviege, ILWU Local 10 in Oakland. The Occupy Movement shut down ports in order to express solidarity with port truckers and Local 21, as well as responding to a nationally coordinated eviction campaign against Occupy.

Negotiations progressed to the point where longshore workers began loading the merchant vessel Full Sources on Feb. 14. “When any company ruptures jurisdiction it is a threat to the entire union. The union jobs wouldn’t be back in Longview if it weren’t for Occupy. It’s a win for the entire class of workers in the Occupy Movement in demonstrating their organizational skills,” said Leviege.

“It is clear that the port shutdowns on

Nov. 2 and Dec. 12, and the impending mobilization in Longview, is what made EGT come to the table,” said Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10 Coastwide Caucus delegate. “When Gov. [Chris] Gregoire intervened a year ago nothing was settled — non-ILWU workers were still working in the port. It wasn’t until rank and file and Occupy planned a mass convergence to blockade the ship that EGT suddenly had the impetus to negotiate.

“Labor can no longer win victories against the employers without the community,” Thomas continued. “It must include a broad-based movement. The strategy and tactics employed by the Occupy Movement in conjunction with rank-and-file ILWU members confirm that the past militant traditions of the ILWU are still effective against the employers today.”

EGT itself made evident the company’s concern about Occupy’s role in the conflict in the Jan. 27 settlement agreement: “The ILWU Entities shall issue a written notice to The Daily News and the general public, including the Occupy Movement, informing them of this settlement and urging them to cease and desist from any actions.”

“The Occupy Movement and rank-and-file unionists both within and outside of our ranks have forced the company to settle, but this is not over,” said Jess Kincaid of Occupy Portland. “Occupy doesn’t sign contracts. We have not entered into any agreements with EGT, nor do we intend to do so. EGT and its parent company Bunge bribe the government for military escorts, use slave labor in Brazil and systematically avoid contributing anything to our social safety net in the U.S. or abroad. There is no ethic here beyond putting money back in the pockets of the 1% at the cost of working people and the sustainability of the earth.”

“It was the brave action of members of Local 21, blocking the train tracks this past summer, that inspired the solidarity of the Occupy Movement up and down the West Coast and around the country,” said Paul Nipper of Occupy Longview. “It was not until Occupy joined together with Local 21 and its labor allies that the company returned to the table. Gov. Gregoire did nothing but let EGT raid longshore jurisdiction until Occupy responded to the call for support.”

Visit www.occupytheegt.org.

At Milwaukee campaign stop

Protesters tell Obama ‘Jobs now!’

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

Hundreds of poor and working people came out to see and issue demands to President Barack Obama during his Feb. 15 visit to the Masterlock company. The plant is located in a predominantly African-American neighborhood in the center of Milwaukee.

As part of his campaign tour, Obama came to Masterlock to tout the creation of 100 jobs at the company through an “insourcing” model. Insourcing ostensibly means bringing a few jobs that were outsourced from the U.S. back to the country — at wages and benefits way below what they previously were.

Tens of thousands of people are unemployed in Milwaukee alone and more than 230,000 statewide. Tens of thousands

more in the state are underemployed and working part time when they want and need full-time work. Nationwide 30 million to 45 million are unemployed or underemployed.

Across the street from the Masterlock plant, which once employed hundreds of mostly African-American workers, neighborhood residents and other protesters were fenced off from the company by yellow tape and barricades, along with dozens of cops, Secret Service and other employees of local, state and federal repressive state agencies.

When the crowd began assembling, a Secret Service agent came to the barricades with Milwaukee cops and asked long-time progressive activist Brian Verdin if protesters were planning a violent protest. On the bullhorn, Verdin responded with a chant — “Poverty is violence”

— that the crowd took up. Then Verdin, hoisting a sign with an image of Dr. Martin Luther King and the slogan “Jobs Not War,” called out the government, the banks and corporations for the violence of poverty, racism and war they inflict on the people everyday.

Thus began an hours-long protest, with a people’s speakout on multiple bullhorns, and marches with many chants through the surrounding neighborhood.

‘The time for change is coming’

Khalil Coleman from Occupy The Hood Milwaukee told Workers World: “They say these young people don’t want change. They say they lazy. They say they don’t want to work. They say they don’t care about their neighborhood. To see these brothers and sisters out here, to see people from different races, different walks of life

— it just gives me more energy.

“I just feel like the time is coming. To see these young people be involved and want to be involved actively in the political process and help changing their neighborhood; it’s going to start something and show in time what these young people really can do in the city of Milwaukee.”

Voces de la Frontera, a Milwaukee-based immigrant rights organization, demanded an end to the deportations and raids of immigrants — more than 1 million people have been deported since Obama took office. Members of the Amalgamated Transit Union demanded full funding for and expansion of public transit.

Members of Peace Action Wisconsin and the International Action Center demanded no war on Iran and money for people’s needs not war. Students

Continued on page 9

Women in the trades demand fair hiring at Temple University

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

Chanting “Temple University! Unions for All!” to the beat of Puerto Rican plane-ra drums, construction workers and their supporters picketed a worksite at Temple University on Feb. 13 to demand fair hiring practices.

The protest was organized by Margarita Padín, who has worked as a carpenter for 23 years and is a member of Carpenters Local 8; Joanna Harris, a member of Operating Engineers Local 542; Dianna Montague, a member of Ironworkers Local 405; and other women and men in the construction trades.

Harris told Workers World: “We are out here today because Temple University and L. F. Driscoll have had a lack of

fair hiring practices for minorities and women at this particular location. It has been a history of Temple University and the other general contractors — the major contractors in the Philadelphia area — to not properly monitor, and hire with fairness, skilled trade laborers. Ironworkers, operating engineers, electricians — the women are not represented. The minorities are not represented.”

The Coalition of Labor Union Women, Temple students and Occupy Philly activists joined the protest, which received supportive comments from passersby and honks from passing cars.

Padín said: “Temple University has \$400 million in current construction projects in one of the poorest districts in the country, but the demographics of this district are not represented on these con-

struction projects. These are the kinds of jobs that lift people out of poverty.”

“The mandate for the make-up of the workforce should be the state of Pennsylvania as well as Temple University — they are in the middle of a minority-populated area. They should be monitoring fairly. ... We’re going to be here until we see a change,” said Harris.

The protest spurred Temple University officials and construction contractors to meet with organizers. But since no progress was made, the labor activists have announced another protest on Feb 20. □



Margarita Padín, right, at Feb. 13 protest. WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Stop the destruction of the postal service

Community Labor United to Save Postal Jobs & Services issued the following media release on Feb. 18 after newspaper, TV and radio media barraged the public that same day with reports that the postal service is broke. The group is organizing a rally on March 17 to protest attempts to lay off postal workers and close post offices.

“The spin is in full swing,” said Johnnie Stevens, coordinator of Community Labor United to Save Postal Jobs & Services, “to spread lies that the [U.S. Postal Service] is broke in order to justify layoffs, post office closings and union busting when the current moratorium expires May 15.”

“Any reporter spending two minutes to research the claim that USPS is broke should honestly report this is a lie,” said Anne Pruden, retired Service Employees 1199 member and coalition organizer. “Instead, they are parroting USPS lies. Raising stamps to 50 cents is meant to falsely convey that USPS has no money.

Meanwhile, they are not raising the very low corporate [postal] rates.”

In a Feb. 6 letter to Rep. Bernie Sanders, USPS Postal Inspector David C. Williams wrote that the USPS “has built a war chest of more than \$326 billion to address future liabilities.” He states that no other private or public entity has been required to pre-fund their retiree and health funds, as Congress has demanded of USPS. Williams says there are billions of dollars in overfunding that could be returned to the USPS now, without requiring future payments to these funds for 21 years.

“This is really about taking the people’s postal service and turning over its technology and business to private communications companies that wine and dine Congress,” explained Charlie Twist, a letter carrier whose union is backing a March 17 protest. “We have already lost more than 100,000 jobs. We are going to fight layoffs of 200,000 more. We know that their real intention is to destroy the entire postal service, bust our unions and



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Community/Labor United for Postal Jobs & Services

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deprive communities of critical service.”

President Barack Obama’s “compromise” to end Saturday delivery is unnecessary. Along with all the other proposals, it is calculated to make the postal service inoperable, and then claim private companies are needed.

“Privatization of the postal service will increase customer costs, lower wages, and deprive seniors, communities of color and rural communities of services and jobs,” says community activist Rosa Maria del Torres. “In New York City and around the country we will fight this all the way.” □

Protesters demand ‘AT&T: Where is the love?’

By Dianne Mathiowetz

Atlanta, Feb. 14 — Several hundred Communication Workers of America and other union members, and Occupy Atlanta and Jobs with Justice activists among others took over the plaza fronting AT&T’s office tower in midtown Atlanta, demanding no layoffs for landline technicians.

Company security guards quickly locked the doors and the impressive main entrance to the building stayed locked all day.

With drums, whistles, chanting and singing, the atmosphere vibrated with solidarity and energy, all focused on defending workers and their jobs and denouncing AT&T’s corporate greed. Everyone there was aware of the cascading effect of the loss of good-paying union jobs with benefits, not just to the individual worker and his or her family but also to the larger community.

Atlanta’s unemployment rate, foreclosure crisis and number of homeless people are already staggering indictments of the “profit at all costs” policies of corporations.

Organizers made good use of the Valentine’s Day theme with demonstrators



wearing heart-shaped signs and singing a revised version of Stevie Wonder’s “I Just Called to Say I Love You.” At one point, the protesters formed themselves into the shape of a giant heart while speakers from unions and community groups declared their love for the threatened workers.

The Teamsters parked their huge, decorated, “Union Power” semi-trailer truck on the adjoining street, providing sound for the rally.

This was the second day of action against the AT&T layoffs.

Yesterday, simultaneous “occupations” took place at AT&T’s office. Around noon, one set of protesters entered the expansive ground floor lobby and sat down in

a circle, declaring their intention to stay until AT&T rescinded the plans to lay off hundreds of skilled workers who install and repair landline phone service.

Outside the building on the broad sidewalk fronting busy West Peachtree Street 15 tents were set up in no time and some 70 sign-carrying demonstrators stationed themselves on the steps leading to the building. People will be maintaining the encampment for as long as needed.

Randall Stephenson, AT&T CEO, was paid more than \$27 million last year. Although the exact number of workers to be laid off keeps shifting as AT&T responds to union pushback, it is definitely in the high hundreds. AT&T is one of the largest companies in the U.S. and one of the most profitable. Its CEO says the cuts are necessary since the number of landline customers is dropping. Yet the technicians claim they are forced to work excessive overtime hours, and still, landline customers often have to wait days to get their service. For many people, including

seniors and rural residents, landlines are both more usable and less expensive.

AT&T’s expansion into new technology communications gives them cover to reduce their skilled unionized workforce and hire lower-wage, no-benefits workers, who also may be contract workers.

Determined to take a stand against this kind of “profits first, workers be damned” policy, union and community activists are mounting a multiple prong fightback. Social media were used to blast news of the “inside, outside” occupation of AT&T headquarters.

The arrests of the dozen valentine-wearing protesters in the lobby were streamed live. They were arrested from inside the lobby, charged with criminal trespass. They were released at different times, starting at about 10 p.m. on Feb. 13, and then the last one today at 5 a.m.

Appeals for supporters to call CEO Stephenson went out on Facebook and Twitter and by email. Supporters are urged to call Michael Matthews, vice president, SE Labor Relations at 205.977.0722 and email CEO Randall Stephenson at Randall.Stephenson@att.com □

Detroit & the struggle against the economic crisis

Emergency management looms while cuts continue unabated

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

Anger and uncertainty are rising rapidly among the workers, youth, seniors, unemployed and professional groups in Detroit amid Governor Rick Snyder's threats against the majority African-American city. A governor-appointed state review panel is currently roaming the corridors and offices of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, exploring whether the city should be placed under emergency management.

Many accuse the banks, the corporate media and their allied politicians of manufacturing this crisis to justify seizing public assets and downsizing municipal services even further and for the outright theft of city employees' health care plans and pensions funds.

The state is giving the city two options: sign a consent agreement mandating massive layoffs and cuts in municipal services or face the appointment of an emergency manager who will nullify the limited authority of elected officials and abrogate union contracts.

Despite these threats the people in the city have been resisting. Some 200,000 people signed a petition aimed at repeal-

ing Public Act 4, the emergency manager law, for submission to the state election commission. Several lawsuits have been filed challenging Public Act 4's constitutionality. The law's only real aim is to ensure that the banks get paid the billions of dollars they claim the working people of Detroit owe them.

Ingham County Circuit Judge William Collette ruled that the meetings of the state-appointed financial review team were invalid because these secret gatherings violate the Michigan Open Meetings Act. Highland Park school board member Robert Davis had filed the suit against the state about this. Davis also challenged the appointment of an emergency manager who could seize control of that city's public school system. (Highland Park is an enclave surrounded by Detroit.)

Judge Collette's ruling bars any future secret meetings of the financial review team, which is headed by Andy Dillion, the state treasurer and former leader of the Democratic Party in the state legislature in Lansing. That decision also nullifies the appointment of Jack Martin as the emergency manager over the Highland Park School Board.

Although the governor's office is appealing the ruling and its applicability, the suit itself and the Ingham County

ruling points to the inherent contradictions in the supposed legality of Public Act 4. With the current economic crisis worsening in the United States, the ruling class will act to weaken even symbolic forms of capitalist democracy to further weaken and exploit the working class and the oppressed.

Cuts continue under Bing

Although the state-appointed review panel has made no decision on imposing a consent agreement or an emergency manager in Detroit, the total onslaught against Detroit's people is underway. Municipal services are eroding as public transportation, public lighting, emergency medical services and the working conditions of city employees all decline.

The corporate newspapers are the main proponents of austerity and emergency management for the city. Yet they demand no concessions from the banks and multinational corporations that have strangled Detroit for decades.

All newspaper articles demand that city unions grant even further concessions to the bosses and argue that defined pension benefits are unsustainable and therefore justify their appropriation by avaricious Wall Street entities. A tentative agreement between the municipal unions and

the corporate-oriented Bing administration calls for massive layoffs, permanent pay cuts, higher co-pays for medical benefits and greater employee contributions to pension plans.

The bus system already suffers from the lack of spare parts, the paucity of skilled workers to maintain the vehicles, and continuing funding cuts for public transportation all around the county. Now it faces even greater downsizing, elimination of routes and less frequent service.

Mayor Bing's administration has proposed halting buses between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m., cancelling all routes during large sections of the weekend, raising fares and lengthening wait times on individual routes. Conditions are already at the breaking point, with 250 buses off the street due to lack of repairs. Because of this, many workers are losing their jobs because they are unable to get to work.

Despite these existing cuts and the ones being proposed, the ruling class and bureaucrats make no claim the austerity measures will cut the deficit or eventually restore city services. Ultimately the actions aimed against Detroit are designed to bust the unions and beat back the people in the city, who have a long tradition of labor and national struggles against racism and economic injustice. □

From the 19th to the 21st century: A Marxist view of socialism

Continued from page 2

est stage of communism.

In "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," Engels writes: "Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which ... is forced to accomplish this revolution. ... *The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into State property.*

"But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinction and class antagonisms, abolishes also the State as State. Society, thus far, based on class antagonisms, had need of the State. That is, of an organization of the particular class which was, pro tempore, the exploiting class, an organization for the purpose of preventing any interference from without with the existing conditions of production.

"When, at last, it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection, as soon as class rule and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production ... are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a State, is no longer necessary. ... State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The State is not 'abolished.' *It dies out.*"

What Marx and Engels did not anticipate is how socialist revolutions have gone down until now. They envisioned

that the socialist revolutions would occur in the most developed capitalist countries — most developed in terms of productive forces, the capability to produce. In fact, the socialist revolutions have occurred in the less developed countries.

20th-century revolutions

When the 1917 revolution occurred in Russia, the country was one of the most underdeveloped in the world, with a huge population, a huge portion of which was peasantry. China, Vietnam, Korea, Cuba, Afghanistan, the African countries — Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau — were all former colonies. All were saddled with a low level of productive forces. In fact colonialism had drained and stolen the countries' resources. Once the revolutions happened, the former colonialists, the imperialists, of course wouldn't leave them alone. This created incredible difficulties for the revolutions.

In the USSR, the Bolsheviks — the communist organization that carried out the revolution — never expected that the revolution could survive isolated from rest of the world. It was a time of revolutionary fervor, and it was assumed that revolutions would happen after World War I throughout Europe and that therefore the new socialist countries would have the resources and support of other socialist countries. But social democracy beat out revolutions in many places, and in the USSR, instead of receiving support from many socialist countries, it faced civil war and the destruction of industry.

We should note that Cuba, despite tremendous difficulties sustaining its own revolution, took this concept of internationalism to heart by sending thousands of soldiers to help fight in the uprisings for libera-

tion throughout the African continent.

This idea makes it all the more important to fight for socialism and communism in the U.S. Just think of how the resources and productive forces in the U.S. could help successful socialist revolutions develop quickly — if such aid were requested.

As for the current socialist countries, we call them socialist out of solidarity with their struggles to build socialism and against all the attacks that have come down on them. But Engels and Marx make clear that until the productive forces develop sufficiently to promote life at a higher level than capitalism, then those countries are in a transitional period from capitalism to socialism. We sometimes also use the terms "workers' state" or "dictatorship of the proletariat" to refer to them. But the basis for building developed socialist societies is to develop production so they can satisfy the needs of the entire population.

High tech means layoffs, low pay — under capitalism

Here's a concrete example of the way in which the contradiction between socialized production (that is, production organized among many workers and sometimes across the globe) and private appropriation (that is, appropriation of all the products of the workers' labor by the capitalists for their own profit) plays out in present-day capitalist countries. And how it could be vastly different under socialism and communism.

We've already discussed how the socialist revolutions of the 20th century took place where capitalism and imperialism were weakest and how they were all burdened by underdevelopment and

colonial domination. Well, in the 21st century, the contradictions of the capitalist system have resulted in crises in the most advanced capitalist countries, as is apparent from their impact on our own lives.

The tremendous development of technology has dramatically raised the productivity of labor — that is, new machines and computerized systems have resulted in the use of fewer workers to produce more than ever before. However, under capitalism, this has resulted in the overproduction of goods that cannot be sold, and it's resulted in mass layoffs.

The focus of the Occupy Wall Street movement — on rising inequality between the wealthy 1% and the 99%, representing the working class (both employed and unemployed) — is a popular expression of the conditions that Marx and Engels discussed when they described the growing poverty among the masses and the fabulous wealth of the capitalist class

Driven by this constant revolution in the means of production, high-tech, present-day capitalism is characterized more and more by low-wage jobs and a permanent and growing reserve army of the unemployed. So, for example, when a factory puts in robots to do the work of many workers, or when retail stores buy software that track sales and inventory and every second of the workers' time, these advances in technology are a threat to the working class. They result in layoffs of many workers and speed-up of those who remain.

But what if the means of production were owned collectively by the workers and run for the purposes of providing for human needs? Then these advances in technology would be a liberating force for humanity. Everyone could be relieved of back-breaking labor and repetitive jobs.

Boston Black History forum

Fight for jobs, against capitalism

By Frank Neisser
Boston

The Boston chapter of the Occupy4Jobs Network held a spirited community/labor forum focusing on the struggle to stop post office closings and the fight for jobs. The Feb. 18 meeting was held in the Nation of Islam's Muhammad's Mosque #11 in Grove Hall in the heart of Boston's African-American community and just one block away from the Grove Hall Post Office, now slated for closing.

Minister Randy welcomed everyone on behalf of the mosque and NOI Minister Don Mohammad, who was a leading organizer of the event. Co-chairs were Dorothea Peacock, of the Women's Fightback Network/Boston, and Deborah L. Wray, of the Rhode Island People's Assembly, which brought a delegation. Bob Traynham, of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union and the Occupy4Jobs Network, led the crowd in singing the "Black National Anthem."

Audrey Armand, a 27-year veteran worker at the Grove Hall post office, criti-

cized the racist targeting of this post office and another one in Upham's Corner. She explained how important both facilities are to the African-American communities they serve. Paul Kilduff, president of Boston METRO Local 100 of the American Postal Workers Union, spoke of Washington's draconian plans to target thousands of local post offices.

Keynote speaker Larry Holmes, national coordinator of the Occupy4Jobs Network and First Secretary of Workers World Party, stirred the crowd with his descriptions of the beginnings of the global revolution against capitalism. He said that it started in Tunisia and Egypt, is expanding in Greece, Spain, Italy, Britain and elsewhere in Europe, and has arrived in the U.S. with the Occupy movement.

Holmes stressed that capitalism has no solutions for youth worldwide other than to build more jails. He explained that Occupy4Jobs' perspective is to unite the Occupy movement's struggles with the fight for jobs by African Americans, Latinos/as and other oppressed workers, who will also provide leadership and guidance.

Barbara Ware, of the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts and the Coalition for Equal Quality Education, gave a dynamic history of the decades-long Black community's fight to attain equal access to educational resources and quality schools in Boston. She explained BEAM's current lawsuit against Boston school closings as well as the upcoming battle to stop the mayor's school resegregation plans.

Diane Dujon, of Survivors, Inc., raised the need to fight back against today's conditions of poverty facing millions. Bishop Filipe Teixeira, OFSJC, of the Diocese of St. Francis of Assisi, and the Rev. George Walter-Slayon, of the Center for Church and Prison, raised the battle to stop the discriminatory "Three Strikes" bill being advanced in the Massachusetts Legislature.

Delegates came from the Brockton School Bus Drivers Rank and File Committee, UNITE HERE Local 26 and many community groups. Boston City Councilor Charles Yancy supported the program, while community radio station Touch 106.1 and the Grove Hall Neighborhood Development Corporation promoted it. □



Protests demand human rights for prisoners

By Judy Greenspan
San Quentin, Calif.

Despite police blockades and freeway ramp closings -- forcing demonstrators to hike to the rally site in front of the prison -- activists occupied the front of San Quentin Prison for several hours on Feb. 20. That day had been designated as the National Occupy Day in Support of Prisoners.

Instead of working 40, 50 or 60 hours per week, everyone could work a greatly reduced schedule, with time for leisure, advanced education and cultural activities.

Human beings could put their minds to solving the great challenges facing the global population, not only to raise the standard of living for all, but also to rescue the planet from the environmental degradation that has been imposed by capitalism and the profit system.

We could imagine that digging for oil and gas or mining for coal — all the things that are dangerous and toxic to workers and the planet — could be eliminated by the true development of renewable energy sources. These are the kinds of possibilities that Marx and Engels predicted when they described the socialist future.

We also believe that when the capitalist class is eliminated as a class and class distinctions are a thing of the past, when there is no longer a struggle for the existence of the individual, the capitalist culture of racism, of divide and conquer, of promoting divisions by country, nationality, race, gender and sexuality could be eliminated as well. Generalized want promotes divisions, and of course, the capitalists use it to their advantage. When that want is eliminated, it will be all the more clear that we don't need to fight among ourselves or allow ourselves to be divided into other categories.

Of course, promoting that kind of unity helps the struggle for socialism move forward. That's why the capitalists hate it so much. And this is precisely why Marxism as an ideology has persisted for more than 150 years and has been taken up by the workers and oppressed in every corner of the globe, wherever people struggle for their liberation. □

Demonstrations were also held in about 15 cities around the country, including New York, Boston and Los Angeles. In New York hundreds of mostly youth in the multinational crowd rallied at the Lincoln Correctional Facility in Harlem and then at a Wells Fargo bank.

Chanting "Inside/outside, we're all on the same side," hundreds of Occupy Oakland activists, former prisoners and human rights supporters converged on the Bay Area's San Quentin Prison, home to death row for male prisoners and the prison where Black Panther and author George Jackson was assassinated in 1971. Today's event represented a partnership between Occupy Oakland and Occupy San Francisco and a coalition of prisoners' rights groups. The rally was chaired by former prisoners Linda Evans, of All of Us or None, and Dorsey Nunn, executive director of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.

The day began with the American Indian Movement's "National Anthem" and a Native drum ceremony. Morning Star

Gali read a moving statement of solidarity from Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier. Gali thanked everyone for coming out "to San Quentin, the belly of the beast, housing 700 men that the state wants to kill."

People read statements from California Security Housing Unit prisoners who had been on a hunger strike to protest the inhumane and torturous conditions of lockdown confinement. A group of Pelican Bay Human Rights Hunger Strikers expressed solidarity with the Occupy movement and labeled "banks and the 'prison-industrial complex' corporate enemies that prey on the souls of humanity."

Tati, a young woman who had served time in a juvenile prison, read a poem by a woman prisoner from the Central California Women's Facility and addressed her remarks to the youth at the protest when



she said, "We have to fight back. We have the power!"

Jabari Shaw, an Oakland activist, led a small rap group that chanted, "Lock it down for liberty. This is prison slavery."

A moment of silence for George Jackson and several statements by members of the San Quentin 6 and other former prisoners who knew Jackson highlighted today's protest. The day ended with a spirited march back to the buses.

Anne Pruden contributed to this article from New York.

Free CeCe McDonald Build solidarity for survivor of racist, anti-trans attack

Continued from page 1

incarceration and other forms of injustice and oppression, according to an extensive survey recently conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. (transequality.org)

'Stand up against those who oppress us'

In November McDonald wrote: "To deal with racism and transphobia directly and upfront is very hard to deal with. Even hearing the words being said left me in total confusion and shock. And to ... be attacked in my own community by individuals who felt it was their duty to yell hate speech at not only me, but my family who was with me, and attack me for their own satisfaction of making someone else's life miserable.

"I felt that I've worked very hard from

where I started, to where I'm at now in my life, just to have it all taken away from me. It's hard enough for gays and trans people to find stability in this society, and I've worked too hard to let anyone just take it from me. ... We have to stand up against those who put us down and try to oppress us." (supportcece.wordpress.com)

McDonald was released on bail in October, but turned herself in on Jan. 4 after a bench warrant was issued for her arrest for alleged violations of the terms of her conditional release. McDonald's family and supporters, on one day's notice, packed the courtroom Jan. 5. The judge ruled against McDonald, and she remains incarcerated with bail set at \$500,000.

Workers World spoke with Katie Burgess, executive director of the Trans Youth Support Network in Minneapolis, who helped spearhead the CeCe Support Committee there. "Unfortunately, CeCe's case

isn't so unusual. We see this a lot, another tragedy of violence and injustice in the community. But CeCe's case is different because she called out to the community."

The committee has "grown quite large" and has organized rallies, a petition campaign, call-in days to the prosecutor's office, fundraisers and other support activities on McDonald's behalf. CeCe Support Committees have sprung up in Bloomington, Ind., and Rochester, N.Y.

Burgess stressed, "People are urged to sign the petition demanding Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman drop the charges and free CeCe. We also need letters of support from organizations sent to the county attorney's office, letters to the editor and other publicity."

To find links to the petition, along with more information on McDonald's case and how to help efforts to free her, go to supportcece.wordpress.com. □

Demonstrations in Palestine, around the world say ‘Free Khader Adnan!’

Update: On Feb. 21 the Guardian (Britain) reported that Adnan had agreed to end his hunger strike in exchange for his release from detention on April 17.

By Gene Clancy

As of Feb. 19, Khader Adnan had not eaten for 64 days; and time is running out.

The 33-year-old Palestinian was taken from his home in Arrabeh village, near Jenin in the occupied West Bank, at 3:30 a.m. on Dec. 17. One day later, he began a hunger strike to protest against the “humiliation and policy of administrative detention.”

Adnan, like hundreds of other Palestinians, was arrested under a military order that Israel has named “administrative detention.” It allows prisoners to be held without charge or trial for periods of up to six months, in spells that can be renewed indefinitely!

Sahar Francis is a lawyer with Addameer, a prisoner rights group based in the West Bank city of Ramallah, and a mem-

ber of Adnan’s legal team. She visited the hunger striker in Ziv hospital in Safad, Israel, on Feb. 17. She described her client, who remains shackled to his hospital bed, as “mentally perfect, but physically very weak.” (Al-Jazeera, Feb. 17)

After examining Adnan on Jan. 29, the organization Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I) said: “His clothes were dirty. His finger(nails) were not trimmed for a long time, and he started to lose his hair. ... His body odor was unpleasant, and (he) lost a third of his weight.” The group said he “suffers from chest pains, and feels he has days, maybe hours, to live.” The Jan. 29 examination was the only medical contact Adnan has had since he was arrested. (Philadelphia Independent Media Center, Feb. 10)

Amidst widespread demonstrations and protests, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have both called on the Israeli authorities either to release Adnan or immediately charge him with criminal offences and have him tried. The



U.S., which likes to tout Israel as “the only democracy in the Middle East,” has been silent. Recently Congress passed, and President Obama signed, a bill giving the U.S. military similar powers of detention, even for U.S. citizens.

With the military’s case against prisoners kept secret from both the defendant and legal teams, defending clients under administrative detention is incredibly difficult, if not impossible.

Palestinian captives inside Israeli prisons frequently refer to the 10 republican

prisoners in Northern Ireland, led by 27-year-old Provisional Irish Republican Army member Bobby Sands, all of whom died after long hunger strikes in 1981. Sands, who was elected to the British Parliament during his fast, died after 66 days of refusing to eat. The revolutionary intransigence of these brave men and others, and other organised actions, were believed to have improved prisoners’ conditions and made gains for their nationalist cause.

Since the rise of a Palestinian nationalist movement in the late 1960s and 1970s to combat Israeli occupation, hunger striking has been a common tactic among Palestinian prisoners that, according to Addameer’s Francis, has frequently succeeded in improving the conditions of their incarceration.

Stories such as Sands’, says Abu Maria, another Palestinian activist who has suffered arrest and abuse at the hands of the Israelis, “made us think that hunger strike is the only way a prisoner can resist.” (Al-Jazeera, Feb. 17) □

London conference on Somalia to plan course for neocolonial control

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The London Conference on Somalia will be held on the present situation and future of the East African state on Feb. 23. Former colonial power Great Britain, which held portions of Somalian territory during the 19th and 20th centuries, is scheming with other Western governments to impose a compliant political system on the strategically located nation.

Somalia has been a focal point for United States and European intervention since the “Ogaden war” of 1977-78. Since 1991, Somalia has struggled to achieve national unity and representative government.

In recent months drought and subsequent famine in much of the country have worsened the already long-term problems of food deficits and water distribution. Since 1992, the U.S., through the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency, has militarily intervened directly and indirectly, creating one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

Since October, the Kenyan Defense Forces and the Ethiopian military have invaded Somalia under the aegis of the White House, the CIA and the Defense Department. They seek to defeat the Al-Shabaab Islamic resistance movement and to consolidate the country as an outpost for mineral extraction, oil exploration and international trade. Reportedly, the U.S, France and Israel have been directly involved in the military offensive, with use of naval forces, drones and intelligence assistance.

All previous attempts to dominate Somalian politics since the early 1990s have failed. The latest efforts in London deliberately exclude Al-Shabaab, which has opposed the Western-backed Transitional Federal Government regime now installed in Mogadishu. The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), which imperialist states train and fund, has been bolstered by interventions from Kenya and Ethiopia as well as Djibouti, where a U.S. and French military base serves as a regional operations center for the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM).

Somalia: Who’s in, who’s out?

A British Foreign and Commonwealth Office statement about the London conference says that they “have secured senior attendance from the region, including from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, as well as from the United States, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Sweden, the African Union and the European Union. The U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will attend.”

It continues, “All together we expect around 40 governments to be represented, along with those multi-lateral organizations already mentioned, plus the World Bank, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the League of Arab States. Representatives from Somalia will attend, including the leaders of the transitional federal institutions; the Mayor of Mogadishu, the Presidents of Puntland and Galmudug; and representatives of Aluh Sunnah wal Jamaah. The President of Somaliland will attend, and we welcome the experience that Somaliland can provide of peace building in the region.”

By excluding Al-Shabaab, the London conference is setting the stage for further aggressive action inside Somalia, not only against the Islamic forces that oppose the alliance with the West, but also against the nation’s people, who have not been consulted about the deliberations and war raging for control of their country.

How will this conference translate into food, water, jobs, economic security and peace when the imperialists have only brought more underdevelopment and insecurity to the region over the last two decades? That this gathering is being held outside of Somalia and Africa speaks volumes about its strategic purpose. Such meetings hark back to the 1884-85 Berlin Conference where the burgeoning colonial powers set out to carve up Africa for their business and political interests.

The British government claims that its efforts are aimed at assisting Somalia with its national security, political processes, social stability and humanitarian relief. Goals include making a “renewed

commitment to tackle collectively the terrorist threat emanating from Somalia ... and breaking up the piracy business model” to foster “agreement on improved international handling of Somalia issues.”

British Foreign Secretary William Hague revealed in a speech Feb. 8 at Chatham House that this will be a sustained project in Somalia. He said, “We must try to change the dynamic in Somalia from one of inexorable decline to an upwards trajectory of gradually increasing stability and security — including human security.” He also declared, “Our engagement with Somalia is not a luxury, it is a necessity. A lawless Somalia is a base for international terrorist attacks.” (raxanreeb.com, Feb. 11)

On the underlying economic interests, Hague reports, “Lawlessness in Somalia is also a threat to international shipping ... 23,000 ships transit through the Gulf of Aden each year, a vital artery of the global economy. Nearly one trillion dollars of trade to and from Europe alone travelled through the Gulf last year.”

Hague visited Somalia in early February, the first visit by a British Foreign Secretary for two decades. London’s enhanced role in Somalia falls in line with Obama administration efforts to encourage more European and allied states to join the Pentagon in military interventions in oppressed nations. With the beginning of oil drilling earlier this year in Puntland — a breakaway region of Somalia — it is no surprise that Britain and the U.S. are accelerating such efforts.

Mart Fineman’s article in the Los Angeles Times of Jan. 18, 1993, exposed that oil exploration was well underway in Somalia and that more than 65 percent of the concessions were already under U.S.-based oil firms’ control. The article pointed out that substantial natural gas resources also exist inside the country.

The article explained, “[N]early two-thirds of Somalia was allocated to the American oil giants Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips in the final years before Somalia’s pro-U.S. President Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown and the nation plunged into chaos in January, 1991.” It

added, “Industry sources said the companies holding the rights to the most promising concessions are hoping that the [first] Bush administration’s decision to send U.S. troops to safeguard aid shipments to Somalia will also help protect their multi-million-dollar investments there.”

The London Conference on Somalia will serve the same purpose as the meetings held in European countries and imperialist-allied Persian Gulf states during the bombing of Libya between March and October 2011. Since the Moammar Gadhafi government’s overthrow, only the capitalist states and their regional surrogates have profited from the changes as the Libyan people’s conditions worsen daily.

The root cause of underdevelopment and insecurity in Africa is the legacy of imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism. Only when the African peoples through their organizations and movements break with this pattern of aggression and domination will the possibility exist for genuine peace and security on the continent. □

New York State Attacks on unions, public education

Continued from page 3

to downgrading experienced, highly paid teachers; and not following guidelines on mandatory classroom practices, like breaking students up into small groups.

This attack on teachers also has an anti-union component. According to the New York Daily News, a union will only be able to appeal up to 13 percent of the “first-year ineffective ratings.” The NY-SUT, comprised of more than 1,200 local unions with a total of more than 600,000 members, did win the concession that these evaluations will be monitored by an independent evaluator.

Limiting the right of teachers to re-

Worldwide solidarity with Greece as

EU finance ministers try to squeeze workers harder

By G. Dunkel

It wasn't enough. The draconian cuts the Greek Parliament accepted Feb. 19, amounting to about 7 percent of the country's gross domestic product, weren't enough for the bloodsucking European bankers. The European ruling class wants to gouge even more out of the living standards of Greek workers, while protecting the wealth of the big ship owners, the bankers and speculators.

The European Central Bank, whose charter forbids it from lending directly to the countries that make up the eurozone, instead lends to private banks at 1 percent; they in turn lend money to Greece, Portugal, Spain and other distressed European countries at much higher rates. This bailout will mean billions in profits to the banks, hedge funds and other speculators who bought Greek bonds at deep discounts.

If Greece defaults and leaves the eurozone, which is possible, the banks might not make as much profit, but insurance and loan guarantees will keep their "hair-cut" from getting too short.

Greece has become a laboratory for austerity.

The cuts will bring the minimum wage to about 500 euros (approximately \$650)

a month. Wages were already low after five years of recession, but prices were high because monopolies rigged the economy. Pensions have been cut and cut again.

Unemployment is over 20 percent overall in Greece, and near 50 percent for youth. Health care, education and other social services have been devastated. Some people who still work haven't been paid for months. Thirty percent of all Greeks currently are living below the poverty level.

Popular reaction to these conditions can be summed up by the slogan: "No one left alone in the crisis." Social solidarity networks have been set up -- sometimes with the help of municipalities -- to help people survive. People help each other with work gathering food for poor families, homeless people and even strikers. Time banks, where people exchange services, have been created.

One vital action of these popular solidarity networks has been to keep the electricity on for people unable to pay their bills. They can't pay because the government added a new, sky-high real estate tax to electricity bills.

International solidarity

A call went out to make Feb. 18, "We are all Greeks" Day, a day of international soli-



arity. It was enthusiastically picked up in France, where people had been going into the Greek Embassy and Greek consulate and asking to become Greek citizens out of solidarity with their sisters and brothers in Greece. (Greek Reporter, Feb. 18)

The Feb. 18 demonstration in Paris was organized by the Association of Greek Students and Workers and endorsed by the French Communist Party (PCF); the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA); a major trade union confederation, Solidaire; and other left parties and social justice and progressive groups. The demonstration in Marseilles was organized by the Party of the Left. Marseilles is where the European Confederation of Unions is planning to hold an all-Europe demonstration on Feb. 29.

There were also demonstrations at other cities scattered throughout France on Feb. 18.

There were protests in seven cities in Germany. Some of the signs requested, in English, "Don't blame us for our government." This is in reference to the German government's pretext that its harsh pro-austerity policies arose through pressure from the German public, rather than the pressure from Germany's big bankers.

There were also demonstrations in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Sweden, Finland, England, Scotland, northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Portugal, Iceland and Tunisia -- all at 2 p.m. on Feb. 18, as requested. The demonstration in New York at Zuccotti Park was set for the evening.

From the YouTube and Facebook postings, none of the demonstrations were massive, but they consciously aimed at breaking down the divisions that the European bourgeoisie are trying to inflame and utilize to ram austerity down the throats of the working class throughout Europe. Many demonstrations were consciously anti-imperialist and against bankers' greed.

As one comment on a YouTube posting put it, "I'm Greek. It happened today that I was informed about that 'wave' of solidarity to Greece and I hope it will become a tsunami. Thank you for your support. I thought we were alone." □

ONTARIO, CANADA

Workers threaten occupation as Caterpillar closes plant

By Martha Grevatt

On New Year's Day, Caterpillar, a Fortune 500 company that made a record \$4 billion in profit last year, locked out 481 members of Canadian Auto Workers Local 27. Local 27 represents workers at Electro-Motive Diesel, which Caterpillar's Progress Rail subsidiary purchased last year after getting big tax subsidies. The union refused to accommodate company demands for pay cuts averaging almost \$20 an hour — from \$35 an hour to \$16.50 an hour. The new wage rate would have been close to what workers make at a newly opened, nonunion locomotive plant in Muncie, Ind.

A Jan. 21 rally drew 15,000 supporters from all over Canada to stand with the workers against "Fat Cat." Nevertheless, on Feb. 3, Caterpillar announced its decision to close the plant. The work will be moved to the Muncie plant — in the U.S.'s

newest "right-to-work" state.

A severance package has not yet been negotiated, but angry CAW members are not going to settle for the minimum payout required by law. "I can tell you, if we had a vote by the membership, the membership would have said, 'Let's occupy the plant today,'" said CAW President Ken Lewenza. (Postmedia News, Feb. 6)

Local 27 President Tim Carrie concurred: "The mood today is one of resolve in regards to achieving a severance package that recognizes our members, that recognizes the situation they've been put in with regards to this closure, and also that recognizes that Caterpillar has put these workers and their families through hell over the past five weeks."

The CAW occupied a Caterpillar plant in Brampton, Ontario, in 1991, winning improved severance payments after the plant closing was announced. More recent CAW occupations of auto parts

plants have achieved similar results.

Now, according to Carrie, the workers have another factor to their advantage: mass solidarity. The union is "getting calls of support from all over the country recognizing that the approach that Caterpillar is taking is unacceptable." (Postmedia News, Feb. 6)

Since the New Year's Day lockout, one of the biggest supporters on the picket line has been Occupy London [Ontario, Canada]. Right away they set up tents outside the picket line. A large delegation marched into Victoria Park for the Jan. 21 rally and from there marched to the picket line after the rally.

The occupation that began on Wall Street has infused the whole working class with a spirit of defiance — witness the victory of longshore workers in Longview,

Wash., won through the solidarity of labor and the Occupy movement. No wonder workers in many countries are talking seriously about the tactic of occupying plants. In Cork, Ireland, a sit-down strike of 32 workers at the Vita Cortex foam manufacturing factory has entered its third month.

The effectiveness of the sit-down tactic was proven 75 years ago during the mass wave of workplace occupations in the 1930s. In 1937, a 44-day takeover of General Motors forced the world's largest auto company to recognize the United Auto Workers. When GM charged the workers with violating property rights, the union countered that they were defending their own property rights — the property rights to their jobs.

Now is the time again — Occupy for jobs! □

At Milwaukee campaign stop Protesters tell Obama 'Jobs now!'

Continued from page 4

demanding cancellation of student loan debt. Members of Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement held aloft a banner demanding President Obama issue an executive order to implement a federal jobs program based on the 1978 Full Employment Act. Hundreds of leaflets for a Feb. 25 WIBOPM organizing meeting to fight for a federal moratorium on foreclosures and evictions were distributed during the action, as were dozens of Workers World newspapers and other information from progressive groups.

Coleman continued "From city to state to county and the federal government, the people have seen time and time again how

our elected officials have supported big corporations and have bailed out banks, but have put the people's needs last. To see so many people out here, it shows how eager we are to get things done in Milwaukee and across the United States.

"Let's challenge everything. We need to drop the status quo. We need to stop doing the things we used to do. We need to stop letting our elected officials do the things they are used to doing. It's time we rise up and make a serious difference in the world. We have the opportunity and the possibility to do it." Coleman and other leaders of Occupy The Hood led a march through the neighborhood and then back to the main rally. □

spond to evaluations they consider unfair, and of unions to defend their members, attacks the very existence of education unions, even if an "independent agency" is in the mix.

Bloomberg plans to close schools

New York City's billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg was shut out of these negotiations at the state level. But he has another rock with which to bash the United Federation of Teachers, which represents teachers and some paraprofessionals in the school system that services 1 million students.

That rock is labeled "school closings." At a raucous Feb. 9 meeting, which overflowed with anger at Bloomberg and his

school policies, the Panel for Educational Policy, which Bloomberg controls, voted to close 22 schools and programs at five others. He has closed 117 schools in the past 10 years. Parents, union members and students all united in their rage to say "Fix our schools — don't close them."

The PEP is also planning to put 33 schools under the DOE's "turnaround" model. If the schools don't improve by the end of June, they will be closed, with half the teachers labeled ineffective and fired.

Instead of devoting time and energy, and of course money, to fixing the system, wholesale firing of teachers and unfair and rigged evaluation schemes are not going to improve education in the United States. □

Argentina vs. Britain: taking sides

The Argentine government lodged a formal protest at the United Nations on Feb. 10 over Britain's militarization of the Malvinas Islands — the territory in the South Atlantic that the British call the "Falklands." The Argentine foreign minister said the British moved a modern warship, sophisticated fighter jets and a nuclear submarine into the region. The jets can reach South America without refueling.

That means another confrontation is brewing over the possession of those islands. The last one 30 years ago involved a two-month war between Britain and Argentina that cost the lives of 350 British and 650 Argentine troops. Today's struggle involves not only nationalist pride but British plunder of oil in regional waters.

The Malvinas' struggle has received little media coverage over the last 30 years outside of Argentina and Britain. It is worthwhile reviewing the issues to explain why it is important for anti-imperialists to take sides in the Malvinas dispute, both in 1982 and now.

Workers World supported claims of Argentina to the Malvinas in 1982, and we do today. Essentially this struggle is between Latin America on one side and British imperialism — a junior partner of U.S. imperialism — on the other.

All Latin American and Caribbean countries have supported Argentina's rights in the Malvinas. Also the regional organizations of Mercosur, UNASUR, ALBA, CELAC, Group of 77 plus China, and the Non-Aligned Movement have made statements in support of Argentina.

It is important to make the nature of this confrontation clear. The perfidious British foreign office tries to disguise Britain's seizure of claim to Latin American territory with the defense of "self-determination" of the 3,100 inhabitants of the Malvinas. Many of these settlers identify as British or at least as an extension of Britain.

The "Falklands," as the imperialists call the island group, is one of the last remaining possessions of the infamous British Empire, which until World War II ruled over and plundered much of the world.

The British argument is roughly the same as the one U.S. imperialism used in Panama before 1979 — the U.S. had to keep possession of the Panama Canal Zone to defend the "self-determination" of the Zonians, that is, U.S. citizens who settled in U.S.-occupied Panamanian territory around the canal. Or the same as French imperialism's argument that it must possess Kanaky ("New Caledonia") in the South Pacific to defend the rights of French settlers against the Native Kanaks — and not to exploit that island's nickel deposits.

"Self-determination" as used by the imperialists is not a principle for protecting the rights of the oppressed, but a pretext for extending imperialist rule.

It is instructive to review the events of 1982. The Argentine regime was a rotten military junta that had slaughtered a generation of revolutionary youth. Before the conflict, the junta had the full backing of U.S. imperialism, the connivance of the CIA, and the heartfelt support of vicious anti-communist Jeanne Kirkpatrick, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N.

Then, on April 2, 1982, the junta ordered Argentine armed forces to retake the Malvinas, which the British in January 1833 took from the newly independent Argentine government and have held ever since.

Britain attacked. After the slightest hesitation, the imperialist powers closed ranks behind Britain. Even Kirkpatrick had to renounce her past cozy relationship with the Argentine junta. U.S. intelligence and communications aided Britain. French imperialism, which had sold weapons to the junta, helped the British military.

Empowered by her victory in the South Atlantic, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher then opened fire on the British working class, especially the miners. The defeated junta, on the other hand, was soon pushed out by the Argentine people.

Progressive and revolutionary forces in the world, despite their hatred of the Argentine junta, supported Argentina's claims to the Malvinas in 1982. They do again, and we join them. □

MUNDO OBRERO

Alto al aumento en las matrículas Estudiantes de Carolina del Norte ocupan reunión de la Junta

Continúa de página 12

than Whitfield, un estudiante de WSSU (Universidad Estatal Winston-Salem).

Unidad y solidaridad juegan un papel importante

La Coalición de Carolina del Norte en Defensa de la Educación, una coalición estatal de organizaciones estudiantiles y juveniles, ayudó a que estudiantes de todo el estado participaran. Algunos/as viajaron hasta 300 millas para unirse a la manifestación. Los/as participantes procedían de cada una de las 17 escuelas que componen el sistema de la UNC. Muchos/as estudiantes se movilizaron para venir de Colegios y Universidades Históricamente Negras de Carolina del Norte.

Anderson explicó: "Yo vine de Winston-Salem a la protesta porque sentí que la necesidad de la representación de estudiantes de colegios y universidades

históricamente negras era una buena idea. De todas las escuelas del sistema de la UNC, la de Winston Salem es una de las que más sufrirá por el alza de la matrícula. Los/as que vinieron antes que nosotros lucharon muy duro, para nosotros permitamos que el derecho a tener una educación sea imposible de obtener".

Es importante destacar que no sólo la NAACP de Carolina del Norte se movilizó, sino que también lo hicieron sus capítulos en los recintos universitarios. Los/as estudiantes conscientemente construyeron lazos con organizaciones de trabajadores, incluyendo a la United Electrical Workers Local 150, la Unión de Trabajadores de Servicios Públicos, y el capítulo de C. del N. de la AFL-CIO. Este fue un ingrediente crucial en la denuncia de los ataques sistemáticos que se están llevando a cabo por el 1%, y para la construcción de la sol-

WW newspaper to participate in Left Forum

By John Catalinotto
New York

Among the 400 panels scheduled for this year's Left Forum, being held on the weekend of March 16-18 at Pace University, are three that Workers World newspaper is organizing. These panels will take up the capitalist economic crisis, the threat of imperialist war and the reality of struggling for socialism in the year of the Occupy movement.

The LF has been a center for the struggle of ideas of people within the left movement who at least consider themselves to be socialist at some level. While the forum leans toward representing social democratic voices and academia, it also represents many ideas of leftist organizations. Nearly every political tendency, from those just left of the openly capitalist Democratic Party to the most revolutionary, tries to express its point of view at the LF.

Besides organizing panels, Workers World newspaper will be one of many organizations staffing a literature table at the Book Fair section of the LF. Political activists and thinkers from around the country and the world will be able to get familiar with Workers World newspaper and with books that WW supports.

The theme for this year's Left Forum is "Occupy the System: Confronting Global Capitalism." In keeping with this theme, Workers World newspaper has organized three panels. The basic agenda of each will be three presentations of 10 to 15 minutes each, followed by 45 minutes of discussion.

The times and places for these panels will be publicized as they are assigned, or can be looked up at www.leftforum.org.

Capitalist crisis

The panel on the capitalist crisis is called, "Is Capitalism at a Dead End? Socialist Revolutions in a Time of Crisis."

This panel's scheduled speakers so far are WW managing editor Monica Moorehead, who is also editor of the book, "Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle"; Brenda Stokely, a founding member of the Million Worker March Movement and a former president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 1707; and Fred Goldstein, author of "Low Wage Capitalism."

The abstract for this panel points out that "rapid technological advancements in production constantly eliminate jobs, especially skilled jobs; each new investment pushes more workers into the army of the unemployed. Capitalism has become a low-wage social system characterized by persistent, growing, massive unemployment and underemployment."

"The class struggle can retard this process but cannot reverse it. Thus, the system is in a permanent crisis that now affects workers in the advanced imperialist countries. The first responses to this crisis have been the uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, general strikes and occupations on Europe's periphery and the Occupy movement in the United States."

The abstract concludes, "The panel will focus on the fightback, the role of the working class, the unions, the community and the students, with special emphasis on how these developments affect the nationally oppressed, including destruction of social services, education and the criminalization of youth of color."

Anti-imperialist struggle

Another WW-organized panel is "Confronting Global Capitalism's Attempt to Recolonize Africa and Asia." Speakers are Abayomi Azikiwe, editor, Pan African News Wire; Joyce Chediac, editor of the book, "Gaza, Symbol of Resistance"; and Workers World editor in chief Deirdre Griswold.

This panel will discuss Washington's attempt to set up Africom [the so-called "U.S. Africa Command"]; U.S./NATO aggression against Libya; intervention in Sudan, Somalia, Ivory Coast and threats against Zimbabwe; the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan; war threats against Syria and Iran; and the role of the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa.

In addition, it will take up the continued U.S. threats against North Korea and the surrounding of China; the character of the states and peoples targeted by imperialism; and the "necessity of progressives in the U.S. to protest and obstruct all imperialist intervention against these peoples and nations."

Socialism and struggle

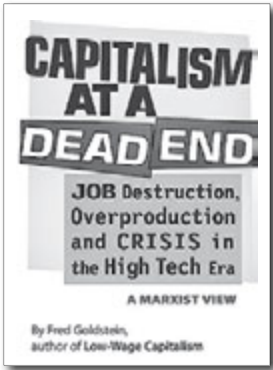
The third WW panel is "Socialism in the United States: Is It Possible?" Three young Marxists from a new generation of revolutionary activists will present the following points: "Who are the 1%? Who are the 99%? That is, what is the relationship between the categories of the Occupy Wall Street movement and the class struggle"; and "We don't need the 1%. The attempts to build socialism point the way to the future, while the capitalist crisis is heading toward chaos. It is necessary to stand strong against racism, imperialism and all oppression as part of fighting the 1%."

The presenters are LeiLani Dowell, a managing editor of WW newspaper; Caleb Maupin, a co-author of "What Is Marxism All About?" and Occupy Wall Street activist; and Larry Hales, who has been an organizer with New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts and Defend Education and with the Bail Out the People Movement. □

Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the High Tech Era

Pamphlet is available at LowWageCapitalism.org and www.workers.org/books
Order pamphlet from Workers World
55 W. 17 St., 5C, NY, NY 10011
\$2 (plus \$1 shipping)



No comparison to case of Cuban Five

Report details crimes of Alan Gross

By Cheryl LaBash

An Associated Press article by Desmond Butler refutes U.S. State Department pronouncements about Alan Gross, a 62-year-old contractor convicted in 2009 and now serving a 15-year prison sentence for undermining socialist Cuba's integrity and independence. The AP article, dated Feb. 12 but written in October, is based on Gross' own reports, filed in the U.S., where he documents his covert actions in Cuba.

According to the article, Gross traveled to Cuba five times in 2009 on tourist visas. He represented himself as a member of a Jewish humanitarian group, not a U.S. government employee. He engaged and endangered unwitting co-travelers to act as mules to conceal component parts used for the three-city secret communication network he was building. He described these acts as "risky business." The article reports, "On his final trip, he brought in a 'discreet' SIM card — or subscriber identity module card — intended to keep satellite phone transmissions from being pinpointed within 250 miles (400 kilometers), if they were detected at all."

The article continues, "The type of SIM card used by Gross is not available on the open market and is distributed only to governments, according to an official at a satellite telephone company familiar with the technology and a former U.S. intelligence official who has used such a chip. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the technology, said the chips are provided most frequently to the Defense Department and the CIA, but also can be obtained by the State Department, which oversees USAID."

Fulton Armstrong, a U.S. government intelligence insider, explained, "The regime-change focus of the [USAID] programs is explicit: Rather than fund them under education and cultural authorities, the Bush and Obama administrations have insisted on citing authorities in the Helms-Burton 'Libertad Act' prescribing a post-Castro future for Cuba." (Miami Herald, Dec. 25)

The AP report is in sharp contrast to the State Department view that Gross was "simply facilitating connectivity between Havana's Jewish community and the rest of the world" (state.gov, Dec. 2) and a Washington Post editorial calling Gross "a would-be humanitarian who got himself caught up in the U.S.-Cuban dispute over U.S. efforts to promote civil society on the island." (Dec. 31)

Cuba answers Washington Post

In an online response to the Dec. 31 Washington Post editorial, René González, one of the Cuban Five, pointed out that Cuba is prevented from connecting to the underwater communications cable just north of the island due to the U.S. blockade. "That the government that prohibits the whole island to connect to the web then devises a clandestine operation to decide which Cubans will have the privilege to circumvent the very prohibition that it imposes on [Cuba's] citizenry can hardly be considered of a humanitarian character."

González was recently released from prison but prevented by the U.S. from returning to Cuba and reuniting with his spouse, Olga Salanueva, who is denied a U.S. entry visa.

A response from the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., signed by

the Deputy Chief of Mission, was never published by the Washington Post. In addition to correcting the record on Gross and pointing out that "the Cuban Government has conveyed to the U.S. Government its willingness to find a humanitarian solution to the case of Mr. Alan Gross on reciprocal humanitarian bases," this letter "notes that readers are misled when the Five Cubans in prison in the U.S. for helping to avoid terrorism against Cuba are described [in the Post editorial] as 'spies ... infiltrating U.S. military installations in South Florida.'"

"The Cuban Five have already served 13 painful years in jail, far from their spouses, children and relatives. They did not infiltrate U.S. military facilities. They were monitoring the terrorist activity of extremist Cuban groups in New Jersey and Florida seeking to preempt their further terrorist actions and to gather evidence about them that could be used to arrest those terrorists operating on U.S. territory."

"Thanks to the work of the Five, Cuba was able to share with the FBI — with appropriate knowledge of and approval by then President Bill Clinton — ... extensive details on the campaign of terror being planned and executed by these individuals. That evidence ... was employed against the Five Cubans, in a legal process corrupted by political motivations. ... [T]he U.S. government secretly paid journalists to write prejudicial articles in the media at the time of the trial, thereby undermining the defendants' due process rights." (cubaminrex.cu/english)

Precedent for humanitarian gestures

Before the winter holidays, Cuban President Raul Castro released 2,900 prisoners in a humanitarian act for those

who had completed most of their sentences, were aged or in poor health. In contrast to the prisoner release in Cuba, the rare mass release in U.S. jurisdictions is usually based on court orders to alleviate overcrowded and inhumane conditions. The U.S. prison-industrial complex incarcerates the largest number of people of any country, both per capita and in actual numbers.

When former New Mexico governor Bill Richardson went to Cuba seeking Gross' release last fall and suggested that there be a "swap," it was pointed out that there is no equivalence between the case of Alan Gross and the case of the Cuban Five. Gross is guilty of actions to subvert the legitimate and sovereign Cuban government. The Cuban Five took no action against the U.S. government and are unjustly imprisoned. Gross is just beginning his prison sentence while the Cuban Five are in their 14th year, suffering restrictions on or denial of family visits and enduring very harsh conditions, including solitary confinement in "the hole," considered a form of torture.

In 1979 the U.S. released four Puerto Rican political prisoners — Lolita Lebron, Oscar Collazo, Rafael Cancel Miranda and Irving Flores Rodríguez. Ten days later Cuba released prisoners. Attorney Jose Pertierra called these releases a delicately negotiated, humanitarian "Gesture for Gesture" in an article by that title published in Counterpunch in March 2009.

While there is certainly no equal sign between the Cuban Five heroes and Alan Gross, the 1979 prison releases prove there is a precedent for the U.S. to put aside its enmity toward socialist Cuba in order to work out a humanitarian solution, "gesture for gesture." □

Tragic prison fire shows Honduras' society chaotic

By Heather Cottin

A fire that began late in the evening on Feb. 14 burned 382 prisoners to death at the Comayagua Prison Farm in Honduras. Some clutched the bars of their cells while others drowned in the water tanks in an attempt to escape the flames. According to Berta Oliva of the prisoner relative organization Cofadeh (Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared in Honduras), some were shot to death before they burned. (resistenciahonduras.net)

The worst prison fire in history burned out of control for 40 minutes before the fire department came. "[The guards] would not open the gates for the fire fighters," according to Honduras Weekly. (Feb. 15) The only response of the burn treatment facility at the U.S. Palmerola Air Force Base nearby was to send a truck for the corpses.

Rosendo Sánchez, serving a 10-year sentence, awoke as the blaze started. He escaped his cell block and says he saw guards firing at other inmates trying to get out. Guards fired at inmates who were trying to escape through the ceiling.

Leonel Casco of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights said a prison official, instead of opening the gates, "threw down the keys and ran away." One prisoner, Rubén García, said, "When the fire started we called out to the people with the keys, but they didn't want to open [our cells]. They killed them! They yelled, 'Die you dogs, it's good that you die!'" (Honduras Weekly, Feb. 15)

Most prisoners in Comayagua had been awaiting trial for more than two years — that is, during the entire period since a coup in June 2009 overthrew the elected president. Some were imprisoned for having stolen a chicken.

The prison at Comayagua was built in the 1940s. According to the prison chaplain it was built for 250 prisoners. The Honduran government has claimed its capacity was 400. At the time of the fire, it housed 852 inmates. The cells were overcrowded and unsanitary. CNN reported that "the bunks are sometimes five, six, seven tiers high, with the lowest person ... sleeping underneath the bunk on the bottom." (Feb. 15)

Honduran jails and prisons provide little to inmates, who must rely on friends and relatives for food. Some prisoners cook in their cells with hotplates, toaster ovens or small microwaves. Comayagua was a decaying facility with water damage in the walls and ceilings, and a decrepit electrical system. Rats infested the prison.

Prisons 'overcrowded tinderboxes'

The National Front of People's Resistance (FNRP) says Honduran prisons are overcrowded tinderboxes, with 24 prisons holding 13,000 inmates in a space meant to house 8,000; 107 inmates had died in a fire at San Pedro Sula Prison in 2004, and 69 had burned to death at the House of El Porvenir in 2003. There have been warnings from government ministers to "create new centers that met safety require-

ments" but it all "remained on paper."

Officials spread lies and disinformation immediately after the fire. The current governor of the Department of Comayagua, who had been a secretary at the prison before the 2009 coup, claimed that a prisoner started the fire. Reports by surviving inmates contradict her.

The falsehood, however, was carried by most of the world's corporate media, blaming the victims for their own deaths.

Interview with Lucy Pagoada

Lucy Pagoada, an official Honduran Resistance member residing in the U.S., spoke to Workers World on Feb. 15. "There was a deliberate attempt to keep information from the people, to interpret it from the point of view of the government," Pagoada said. "The transmission from the people's radio station, Radio Globo, was very weak. There appeared to be a deliberate attempt to keep their reporters off the air. But the media, Honduran National Radio and Radio America — belonging to the same people who perpetrated the 2009 coup — said people should not be alarmed, that the situation was under control."

"When Radio Globo, the progressive radio station, arrived to interview those waiting outside the prison for word about their brothers or sons or husbands or fathers, the crowd chanted, 'Justice, justice, justice!' This tragedy shows that in Honduras there is no justice."

"There is complete social anarchy in

Honduras," she continued. "The indifference, corruption and disrespect for human life are the direct result of the 2009 coup that brought the agents of the ruling class in to control the people of Honduras. Honduras has the highest murder rate in the world, 82 per 1,000, as opposed to the world average of nine per 1,000. There is never any investigation of these murders. Everything is ignored. There is complete impunity."

"The government of Honduras, formed out of 'golpista' [coup plotters'] electoral machinations, has deliberately created a condition of nongovernance. The purpose of this nongovernance is to stop the political process from taking place. The people who perpetrated the coup against [President Manuel] Zelaya in 2009 intend to create a chaotic situation to justify U.S. intervention or military control over the country," Pagoada said.

"These people are capable of committing any kind of crime to stay in power. There are constant death threats on the lives of President Zelaya and his wife, presidential candidate Xiomara Castro Zelaya, who is LibRe's candidate for president in 2013. [LibRe is the short name for the Freedom and Refoundation Party.]

"They are using this tragedy to justify having the Honduran army in control of Honduras. The same people behind the coup are behind this tragedy, and they want Honduras in a state of chaos," Pagoada said. □

Las contradicciones en el capitalismo

A continuación se presentan extractos de una charla dada por Richard Kossally, miembro de Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero durante un foro del mismo en Nueva York el 3 de febrero.

Nacida de la sociedad feudal surgió la burguesía, una nueva clase que dominaría la sociedad.

Todo sistema social nace directamente del sistema social anterior. La burguesía surgió de una capa media privilegiada que se desarrolló durante la sociedad feudal. Karl Marx afirma en el capítulo XXXI de “El Capital”, “Es indudable que ciertos pequeños maestros artesanos, y, todavía más, ciertos pequeños artesanos independientes, e incluso obreros asalariados, se convirtieron en pequeños capitalistas, y luego, poco a poco, mediante la explotación del trabajo asalariado en una escala cada vez mayor y la acumulación consiguiente, en consumados capitalistas”.

Durante un tiempo los modos contradictorios de producción feudal y capitalista existieron uno al lado del otro, pero uno tenía que dominar. El modo de producción capitalista requiere de la libertad del capital. Esto era incompatible con los lazos feudales a la tierra, con el secretismo



MO FOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

Richard Kossally

de los gremios del comercio, y con la organización general de la sociedad feudal.

La organización feudal de la sociedad estaba condenada a la extinción

Antes de la aparición del modo de producción capitalista, los productos se hacían de principio a fin sobre una base individual. Conforme se introdujo la manufactura, el viejo modo de producción se abandonó.

La manufactura, teniendo a diferentes trabajadores que realizan diferentes tareas para la elaboración del mismo producto, era superior a la elaboración del producto entero por un mismo trabajador individual, ya que requiere menos tiempo de trabajo para producir un producto determinado. Los productos de los dos diferentes modos de producción tenían que ser vendidos en el mismo mercado. El productor individual no podía competir y no tuvo más remedio que convertirse en un trabajador asalariado.

Con la constante actualización de la maquinaria caracterizada por el capitalismo, el producto del trabajador individual disminuyó aún más en el valor de mercado, no porque la calidad del producto elaborado fuera más pobre, sino porque se requería

más tiempo de producción en comparación con el producto social de la fábrica.

Los patronos expropián lo que los trabajadores producen

Bajo el capitalismo, la producción se socializó. Es decir, muchos trabajadores contratados por un capitalista y su labor colectiva, combinado dentro de un establecimiento con un plan de producción definido, produce productos útiles para el intercambio con el fin de obtener una ganancia para el capitalista. Ninguno de los productos elaborados por los trabajadores pertenecen a ellos, sino que todos pertenecen al capitalista. Los trabajadores reciben una fracción del valor de lo que su trabajo produce en la forma de salario.

Esta es una de las principales contradicciones dentro del capitalismo: el capitalista individual se apropia para sí mismo lo que se había producido socialmente por muchos trabajadores. El trabajador es un esclavo asalariado. El producto de su trabajo pertenece a otro. El salario del trabajador en general, es suficiente para que él o ella y su familia lleguen al próximo día de pago. Él o ella es un trabajador asalariado de por vida.

La ganancia del capitalista, por el contrario, sirve para esclavizar aún más al trabajador. Algunas de estas ganancias se utilizarán para revolucionar los medios

de producción, mediante la inversión en máquinas más sofisticadas y/o más para expandir la empresa capitalista, y aún le queda suficiente para vivir muy a lo grande.

Este capitalismo no existe solo. En cualquier industria, los capitalistas que producen lo mismo o algo similar se envuelven en una competencia feroz y siempre tratan de socavarse el uno al otro vendiendo más barato. Usan diferentes tácticas para abaratar los productos que producen los trabajadores. Compran máquinas de fabricación más sofisticadas e intensifican la explotación de su fuerza de trabajo haciendo que los obreros trabajen más fuerte y/o por más tiempo.

El constante perfeccionamiento de la maquinaria también desplaza a los trabajadores, ya que se necesitan menos trabajadores con la nueva maquinaria. Como dijo Federico Engels: “El producto mismo del trabajador se convierte en un instrumento para su sometimiento”. La amenaza de la sustitución de los trabajadores es una herramienta muy poderosa que poseen los capitalistas. Ellos utilizan esta amenaza como presión para recortarles los salarios a los empleados y para extraer todo lo que puedan de cada trabajador. Así que bajo el capitalismo, el aumento en la productividad del trabajador conduce a una más profunda explotación. □

Alto al aumento en las matrículas

Estudiantes de Carolina del Norte ocupan reunión de la Junta

Por Ben Carroll

Más de 200 estudiantes de todo Carolina del Norte, se concentraron en la ciudad de Chapel Hill el 10 de febrero para protestar contra los aumentos en las matrículas. La protesta fue organizada por la Coalición de Carolina del Norte en Defensa de la Educación.

La Junta de Rectores (BOG por el nombre en inglés) de la Universidad de Carolina del Norte, que supervisa los 17 recintos del sistema, se reunió ese día para votar por un aumento en las matrículas de más del 10% para la mayoría de las escuelas. Después de una marcha que interrumpió el tráfico vehicular a la hora de más congestión, los/as estudiantes llevaron la manifestación hasta el interior del vestíbulo del edificio principal, ahogando con consignas las voces de los/as miembros de la junta e interrumpiendo por dos veces la reunión. Más tarde, los/as estudiantes tomaron a su cargo la reunión de la BOG y convocaron un “Consejo Popular de Educación”.

Los/as estudiantes comenzaron a reunirse a las 8 am en la parte central del recinto de Chapel Hill de la Universidad. Allí, el Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, presidente de la NAACP de Carolina del Norte, les habló mientras se preparaban para marchar. El objetivo de los/as estudiantes era el de conectar la lucha contra los aumentos en las matrículas a la lucha más amplia de detener que el estado balancee la crisis del presupuesto sobre las espaldas de los/as trabajadores/as y estudiantes.



FOTO: PHILIP TIPPETT

‘Consejo Popular de Educación’, Chapel Hill, N.C.

La marcha luego se dirigió a la reunión de la BOG, paralizando el tráfico durante más de 30 minutos. Después de llegar al edificio principal, los/as estudiantes se aglomeraron, llenando totalmente el vestíbulo. Pasaron frente a la policía que trataba de impedir su entrada en el edificio, mientras gritaban consignas que resonaban por los pasillos en contra del alza de matrícula y exigiendo educación gratuita.

Contagiado por el espíritu electrizante y militante de los/as manifestantes, el reverendo Barber se dirigió a los/as asistentes, en el estilo popularizado por Ocupar Wall Street de mic-check”. [NT: prueba de micrófono o “micrófono popular” utilizada por el movimiento de Ocupar donde los/as manifestantes repiten frase por frase lo que dice él o la oradora para que todas las personas puedan oírle. Esto se debe a que en la ciudad de Nueva York, donde comenzó este movimiento, se prohíbe el sistema de sonido]. Él dijo: “Es-

tamos en lo correcto al desafiar estos recortes por la Asamblea General. Somos la generación que se niega a dar paso atrás. Estemos claros. Esto no termina aquí. Este es el comienzo de un nuevo movimiento estudiantil en Carolina del Norte y en esta nación”.

Andrew Payne, un ex alumno y ex Presidente de la Asociación de Consejos Estudiantiles, fue arrestado después de que dejó su asiento en la sala de reuniones de la Junta y luego intentó volver a entrar. La policía lo tiró al suelo y lo arrastró antes de arrestarlo.

Estudiantes se apoderan de la reunión y convocan ‘Consejo Popular de Educación’

En el vestíbulo, estudiante tras estudiante testificó acerca de los efectos paralizantes de la deuda de préstamos estudiantiles; el alza del costo de la matrícula cada año, mientras se reducen las clases y se despiden profesores/as; la lucha que

tienen muchos/as para pagar la escuela; y cómo los aumentos en las matrículas son parte del ataque más amplio que libra el 1% en contra de los/as trabajadores/as y estudiantes.

Después de que la BOG votó a favor de aumentar la matrícula, los/as estudiantes irrumpieron en la reunión y se hicieron cargo de la sala, cerrando la conferencia de prensa de la Junta. Mientras cientos de estudiantes llenaban la sala, los/as miembros de la Junta se escaparon por la puerta trasera. Sólo el Dr. Franklin McCain, un miembro de los 4 de Greensboro y veterano del Movimiento de Derechos Civiles, permaneció para apoyar a los/as estudiantes.

Los estudiantes tiraron al suelo las tarjetas de identificación de los/as miembros de la Junta y declararon que el “Consejo Popular de Educación” comenzaba su sesión, solicitando propuestas. Las resoluciones fueron presentadas exigiendo educación gratuita, el acceso de estudiantes indocumentados/as al sistema universitario, y la financiación total para los colegios y universidades negras.

Otras demandas fueron poner fin al racismo y a la financiación de la guerra a expensas de las necesidades humanas. Un llamado rotundo se hizo para que los/as estudiantes llevaran esta lucha a sus recintos y siguieran construyendo el movimiento.

!Mira lo que hemos hecho! Así es como empezamos a hacer las cosas. Sin embargo, cuando nos vayamos de aquí, tenemos que seguir luchando”, dijo Jona-

Continúa a página 10